

PROVIDING FOR INTENSIFIED RESEARCH INTO THE CAUSES,
HAZARDS, AND EFFECTS OF AIR POLLUTION INTO METHODS
FOR ITS PREVENTION AND CONTROL AND FOR RECOVERY OF
CRITICAL MATERIALS FROM ATMOSPHERIC CONTAMINANTS

JUNE 30, 1952.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State
of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. KLEIN, from the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. J. Res. 218]

The Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, to whom was referred the joint resolution (H. J. Res. 218) to provide for intensified research into the causes, hazards, and effects of air pollution, into methods for its prevention and control, and for recovery of critical materials from atmospheric contaminants, and for other purposes, having held hearings and considered the same, report favorably thereon with amendments and recommend that the joint resolution do pass.

The amendments are as follow:

Page 2, line 6, strike out "and" and insert after the word "Interior" "and the Secretary of Agriculture".

Page 3, line 4, strike out "and to", insert a comma after the word "Service", and on line 5 after the word "Interior" insert "and to the Department of Agriculture".

Page 3, line 8, strike out the words "and the", insert a comma after the word "Interior", and on line 9 after the word "General" insert "and the Secretary of Agriculture".

Page 3, line 19, strike out the word "and", and after the word "Interior" add "and the Secretary of Agriculture".

Page 4, line 1, strike out the "and", insert a comma after the word "Interior", and on line 2 after the word "Service" add "and the Secretary of Agriculture".

PURPOSE

This resolution recites the need for intensified research into the causes of air pollution, authorizes and directs the Surgeon General, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Agriculture to in-

tensify their respective activities within the scope of their existing authority with respect to the conduct of research investigation, experiments, demonstrations, and the publication and dissemination of information through appropriate media relating to the causes and effects and means of prevention and control of air pollution.

It authorizes appropriation of such money as may be required and requires a report each year to the Congress.

The following letters were received from the Department of Interior and the Federal Security Agency:

FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCY,
Washington, May 25, 1951.

Hon. ROBERT CROSSER,
*Chairman, Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce,
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter is in response to your requests of January 5, March 23, April 6, and April 7, 1951, respectively, for reports on House Joint Resolution 38, House Joint Resolution 218, H. R. 3536, and H. R. 3538, joint resolutions and bills to provide for research into the problem of air pollution.

House Joint Resolution 38, H. R. 3536, and H. R. 3538 are substantially identical with House Joint Resolution 416 and House Joint Resolution 441, Eighty-first Congress, on which we reported favorably to your committee on May 16, 1950.

House Joint Resolution 218 broadens the approach of those earlier joint resolutions in that it would provide for intensified activities in the field of air pollution, within the scope of their statutory authority, by both the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service and the Secretary of the Interior. This joint approach recognizes that the pollution of the air, which is known to cause serious damage to the health of the Nation, results primarily from the dissipation of fuels and mineral products into the atmosphere by wasteful industrial processes and methods.

It would direct a realistic attack to be made upon the problem by combined effort over a 5-year period to discover the causes and immediate and long-range effects of air pollution and the best means for its prevention and control, and for the conservation or recovery of the strategic materials being lost at the present time. While acknowledging the health hazards and the need for conservation of resources to deserve paramount consideration the joint resolution also takes into consideration other Federal interests, and the State and local responsibility for the problem, by providing for the Secretary of the Interior and the Surgeon General to cooperate with all public and private bodies with a view to aiding the States and local agencies in discharging their responsibilities.

The limitation of the intensified research program to a period of 5 years should, in our opinion, allow sufficient time to determine many of the specific chronic and acute toxic effects of air pollution on health and to arrive at feasible methods for their control. The progress being made toward this end, and the current needs of the problem, would be yearly reexamined by the Congress under a provision of the joint resolution which calls for an annual report and recommendations by the Surgeon General, reporting through the Federal Security Administrator, and the Secretary of the Interior.

We therefore recommend that the Congress take the necessary action to accomplish the basic objective of these joint resolutions and bills for air-pollution research, and we respectfully recommend the provisions of House Joint Resolution 218.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that there is no objection to the submission of this report to your committee.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN L. THURSTON,
Acting Administrator.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., April 28, 1952.

Hon. ROBERT CROSSER,
*Chairman, Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce,
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.*

MY DEAR MR. CROSSER: Reference is made to your requests for reports from this Department on House Joint Resolution 218, H. R. 3536, and H. R. 3538, respectively.

House Joint Resolution 218 is a joint resolution to provide for intensified research into the causes, hazards, and effects of air pollution, into methods for its prevention and control and for recovery of critical materials from atmospheric contaminants, and for other purposes. It relates to research on air pollution by the Secretary of the Interior and the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service on a cooperative basis.

H. R. 3536 and H. R. 3538 are identical bills to provide for research into the health hazards of air pollution, and for other purposes. They direct the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service to engage in research on air pollution.

These three measures would add nothing of substance to the authority already vested in the Secretary of the Interior and the Surgeon General to perform research on air pollution. Their only novel features are that House Joint Resolution 218 requires annual reports to Congress and an intensification of research over the next 5 years, while H. R. 3536 and H. R. 3538 emphasize the desirability of discovering specific engineering preventive and control measures for air pollution and require the research program to be completed within 3 years.

It is the general policy of this Department to make an adverse report on measures introduced in Congress which propose no substantive change in the law but simply purport to endorse or authorize specific activities already covered by general legislation, although some exceptions to this policy have been made in connection with matters or programs of major public consequences and large financial scope, such as the synthetic-liquid-fuels program and the Navajo-Hopi rehabilitation program. The subject of air pollution is undoubtedly important; if the Congress wishes to enact measures of this sort as an up-to-date expression of its thinking on the importance and desirability of intensified research in air pollution, we suggest that House Joint Resolution 218 is preferable to H. R. 3536 and H. R. 3538 and in any event, urge that the latter bills not be enacted.

The problem of atmospheric pollution has become increasingly serious. Industrial production during the last decade has grown tremendously. The expansion of plants and the development of new industrial communities have been accompanied by increasing discharge of smoke, fumes, and industrial wastes in the vicinity of populous communities. Surveys last year indicate that smoke damage alone cost more than 1½ billion dollars.

Because of this mounting concern over the problem of atmospheric pollution, President Truman addressed a letter on December 10, 1949, to the Secretary of the Interior requesting him to organize an interdepartmental committee to call the first United States Technical Conference on Air Pollution. In his letter the President stated:

"The contamination of the atmosphere and its potential adverse effects on health, industry, agriculture, and natural resources are causing wide concern. The agencies of the Federal Government are being called upon to assist private, State, and municipal interests in finding a solution of air-pollution problems."

The United States Technical Conference on Air Pollution was held in Washington on May 3, 4, and 5, 1950, and was attended by over 750 outstanding scientists and representatives of universities, private industries, cities, and Federal, State, and local governments from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and the Netherlands. Some 95 papers were presented before 7 panel meetings, covering the health, meteorological, equipment, legislative, agricultural, instrumentation, and chemical aspects of the problem. The Conference urged proposals that the Federal Government help in the solution of air-pollution problems.

This Conference was, in fact, an outgrowth of the many years of research which the Bureau of Mines of this Department has conducted on the problems of air pollution. The Bureau of Mines has frequently been called upon by State and local governments, and by private industry, for assistance in preventing atmospheric pollution. It has an established Office of Air Pollution and a staff of scientists and engineers with special qualifications, training, and experience in dealing with this problem. The Bureau of Mines is now participating in a coordinated program designed to solve the difficult air-pollution problems of the country of

Los Angeles and the city of Beaumont, Tex., and its laboratories are working on processes to eliminate sulfur dioxide fumes from mine waste piles and to prevent acid from entering streams adjacent to coal mines. About 50 information circulars, reports of investigations, and bulletins have been published by the Bureau on matters relating to atmospheric pollution. These activities and the problems arising from them have long been recognized as being within the peculiar province of the Bureau of Mines, since practically all air pollution results from the burning of fuels, the smelting of ores, the refining of petroleum, the operation of internal-combustion engines, the mining and processing of fuels and building materials, and related activities.

House Joint Resolution 218 provides a realistic approach for the solution of this important problem of air pollution by directing intensified activity on a cooperative basis in the field of air pollution by the Secretary of the Interior and the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service. It recognizes that such a joint approach is essential to deal with air pollution because its serious effects upon the Nation's health stem primarily from wasteful industrial processes and methods which dissipate fuels and mineral products into the atmosphere. The resolution therefore prescribes such cooperative effort and research over a 5-year period to ascertain the causes and the effects both immediate and long-range, of air pollution, the best means for its prevention and control, and methods for the conservation or recovery of the vast quantities of strategic materials now dissipating into and contaminating the atmosphere. The joint resolution emphasizes the primacy of dealing with the health hazards and promoting the conservation of resources. It also provides for appropriately effectuating other interests of the Federal Government and recognizes State, local, and private responsibilities in dealing with the problem of air pollution, by providing that the Secretary of the Interior and the Surgeon General shall coordinate their activities and cooperate with public and private bodies insofar as practicable to aid them in discharging their responsibilities in combating air pollution.

We believe that the 5-year period for the intensified research program should allow sufficient time to determine many of the specific chronic and acute toxic effects of air pollution on health and to arrive at feasible methods for their control. The progress being made toward this end, and the current needs of the problem, would be yearly reexamined by the Congress under a provision of the joint resolution which calls for an annual report and recommendations by the Secretary of the Interior, and by the Surgeon General through the Federal Security Administrator.

The research proposed under this program may result in substantial aid to our current defense program. Many products of strategic value to our national defense can be recovered from the noxious effluents. For example, sulfur dioxide when discharged to the atmosphere is quite harmful but, when removed from waste stack gases by proper equipment, becomes a source of appreciable tonnages of sulfur—a commodity which is in critically short supply. The heat wasted in stack gases can be recovered to effect sizable reduction in fuel consumption with consequent conservation of fuels. Many of the dusts discharged from metallurgical furnaces contain large percentages of metals that are of great importance to the defense effort, if effective and efficient means of recovery can be developed.

We believe that the enactment of House Joint Resolution 218 may be of substantial aid to the achievement of more effective control and prevention of air pollution and the conservation of our Nation's resources.

We do not favor the enactment of H. R. 3536 and H. R. 3538, which would impose upon the Surgeon General alone the burden of carrying out a program of investigation and research to determine the effects of air pollution and to discover specific engineering preventive and control measures for eliminating its dangers. These two bills fail to recognize that research on problems of air pollution falls into two categories: (1) research on health hazards, and (2) the development of engineering measures for reducing the discharge of contaminants to the atmosphere. Historically, the first category has been the province of the Public Health Service of the Federal Security Agency, and, the second, the province of the Bureau of Mines of this Department. It is my sincere belief that air pollution could be, and should be, eliminated by the joint efforts of these two agencies.

The Bureau of the Budget has advised that there is no objection to the presentation of this report to your committee. The Bureau has stated, however, that "in view of present fiscal and the defense requirements, this advice should not be construed as reflecting any commitment on the timing of a request for appropriations to carry out the purposes of the proposed legislation, if enacted."

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT R. ROSE, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of the Interior.